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UNDP helped prepare $77 million emergency appeal for Haiti

The Government of Haiti, the United Nations and the Organization of American States appealed for $77 million to meet immediate humanitarian needs and to facilitate the transition to reconstruction and development in Haiti. The appeal, launched simultaneously in Port-au-Prince and Washington, DC, on 6 December, covers a six-month period. It seeks funding for continued humanitarian and reconstruction assistance during Haiti's critical transition period until development programmes get under way. UN officials concerned say that they hope donors will respond quickly to the appeal with pledges to the relevant agencies and offices. The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs will be tracking the pledges as they are made in response to the appeal.

"We are in Port-au-Prince for the launching of an appeal to the international community to come again in support of the Haitian efforts for relief and reconstruction," said Fernando Zumbado, Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Poverty is our common adversary and we need to join efforts to fight against it and to succeed. There will be no solution to poverty if the burden is left solely to the poor," said Mr. Zumbado.

Priority activities have been identified in the fields of governance, agriculture and environment, education, health and support to local communities and the private sector. Technical assistance for public administration at the ministerial and municipal levels, and to the judiciary and Parliament, are also included. Job creation aimed at achieving a rapid rise in the income of families and urgent measures to arrest the serious deterioration of the environment are also given special attention.

The activities presented in the appeal are intended to facilitate a smooth transition to medium and long-term reconstruction and development efforts. The appeal is "a bridge between humanitarian assistance and a full programme of rehabilitation and development," said Mr. Zumbado.

The appeal document acknowledges earlier announcements by some donors that they will launch assistance programmes in Haiti, as well as reconstruction efforts of the Multinational Force in the country. The requirements stated in the appeal launched this month were determined on the basis of immediate needs not provided for in those programmes.

Humanitarian assistance to Haiti under the difficult conditions of recent years has only addressed the most pressing basic needs. Despite tangible results in a number of areas, the limited assistance available has not been

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Lois Jensen/UNDP

Priority activities in Haiti have been identified in the fields of governance, agriculture, environment, education, health and support to local communities and the private sector.

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Haiti, *continued*

able to prevent conditions in the country from deteriorating.

The appeal was prepared jointly by UNDP and the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in close consultation with the Government of Haiti, donors, programmes and agencies of the UN system and non-governmental organizations.

Latin American and Caribbean advisors urge hemispheric indigenous rights and environmental safeguards

Seventeen former presidents, Nobel Prize winners and other leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean call for a wide range of reforms and new hemispheric relationships in a report released this month called "Our Common Agenda for the Americas." The report recommends a ten-year plan to increase equity for the poor, women and children, concrete steps toward creation of a Western Hemisphere Free Trade Area and substantial changes in the way taxes and subsidies are used. The aim is to encourage the sustainable use of natural resources and to discourage wasteful consumption, among other proposals.

According to the report, most of the region's leaders have failed to include indigenous participation and representation into basic political and economic decision-making. For example, it says that while the bulk of natural resources and biodiversity are located in areas inhabited by indigenous people, their rights as stakeholders and beneficiaries of these resources have gone unrecognized. The report says that states should clearly demarcate and protect indigenous territories, and establish an independent national body for the fair and peaceful resolution of conflicts over indigenous territories.

"Our Common Agenda" was published by the Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and Environment for distribution at the Summit of the Americas held in Miami on 9-11 December. The Commission, an independent advisory body formed in 1988 by UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank, includes six former heads of state, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Nobel Prize winners and notable representatives of indigenous groups, academia and the private sector. The group began working on the report as soon as the Summit was called by the U.S. administration, and used an early draft to stimulate discussions over the past eight months with government officials and grass roots organizations. Their responses are reflected in the final draft. (see box)

The following are among the conclusions and recommendations in "Our Common Agenda for the Americas":

- Countries should develop a ten-year hemispheric plan for poverty reduction. "In the Americas, natural resources are abundant and wealth is generated, but under conditions of unacceptable inequality. 270 million Latin Americans exist in poverty, and half of these people are unable to maintain a basic level of nutrition." Advancing the status of women and the health and education of children are priorities in a programme of sustainable human development.

- Principles are laid out to work toward creation of a Western Hemisphere Free Trade Area, including building on GATT, NAFTA and other multilateral, rather than bilateral trade agreements; providing adjustment assistance for weaker countries; making provisions in trade pacts for environmental protection and for social justice in such areas as child exploitation, and rules that exporters maintain the same safety and health standards in exported goods as those required for domestic consumption.

- Trade should be used to strengthen, rather than damage, environmental and social protection by having trading partners calculate the true cost of social indicators and natural resources in national accounting standards (GNP and GDP).

- Countries should reinforce democratic governance, particularly by strengthening the judiciary. The report calls for special attention to combating corruption and strengthening local courts, while increasing the number of judges on the Inter-American Court on Human Rights from the current eight to 50.

- To finance sustainable human development in the Americas, fiscal reform is needed more than is increased aid. The report proposes reducing conventional taxes such as income taxes and replacing them with environmental consumption taxes, to save the government expenditures on environmental regulation and pollution abatement while advancing objectives of more economic growth with less environmental degradation. Tax collection must be improved too.

Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam accept historic document for Mekong development

Delegates from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam accepted and initialled a draft of the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin on 28 November. The initialling occurred at the fifth and final meeting of the Mekong Working Group chaired by UNDP. The Government of Vietnam hosted the meeting, held in Hanoi.

This historic document for the joint development of the Lower Mekong Basin will now be submitted to the appropriate authorities in each of the four countries for approval with a view to the Agreement's entry into force by signature within 90 days.

The draft Agreement spells out objectives and principles for jointly developing the water and related natural resources of the largest freshwater resource in South East Asia. It calls for the four signatory countries to use the resources of the Mekong in a reasonable and equitable manner, observing principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and environmental protection.

The draft Agreement establishes an institutional framework for implementing the development plans for the Lower Mekong in cooperation and coordination with the member countries and the international community. The Mekong River Commission will be established as an international organization with three permanent bodies: the Council, at Ministerial and Cabinet level, for making policies and decisions as well as resolving differences; the joint Committee as the primary body to carry out the policies; and the Secretariat to provide technical and administrative support for the Commission. Provision has also been made for adding new members to the Agreement.

The acceptance of the draft Agreement signifies the willingness of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam to work together in all fields of development related to the Mekong, the twelfth longest river in the world. They will pledge to use, manage and conserve the resources of the River for activities such as irrigation, hydro-power generation, navigation, flood control, fisheries, timber floating, recreation and tourism in a manner that will benefit each of the four countries.

Mr. Nay Htun, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Chair of the Fifth Mekong Working Group, noted: "UNDP is pleased to have played a role leading to the draft Agreement initialled today. Over the last 37 years, UNDP has provided more than $50 million in support of Mekong cooperation."

Dakar meeting adopts blueprint for fostering gender equality and development in Africa

African cabinet ministers adopted a Platform for Action which pledges "commitment to forge a new ethic for sustainable development based on the equal and active participation of women, men and youth as agents of change at family, community, national and international levels," during the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The document produced at the high-level meeting, held from 16-23 November in Dakar, Senegal, articulates the region's vision for integrating women's concerns into political, economic, cultural and social policies, and for reconciling economic growth with social equity.

The Platform for Action urges African governments to reduce military expenditures and invest the savings in economic activities, and to "make peace education, human rights and humanitarian law a compulsory component of school and college curricula." The Platform also urges governments to promote women's political and economic empowerment, access to education, training, science and technology, and health and family planning services.

"Africa has awakened to the realization that the responsibility and the promise for development rest primarily in the effective utilization of its own resources, including women," said Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Assistant Administrator and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa. "UNDP is committed to a full partnership with African women in promoting a new development thinking or a paradigm which places people at the centre of development," added Ms. Sirleaf in her speech to the regional meeting. The Fourth World Conference on Women will be held in Beijing, China on 4-15 September, 1995.

Approved projects:

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Zimbabwe — Building Capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa to Respond to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — Africa's need for technicians, planners, scientists and other skilled professionals places it at a considerable disadvantage in formulating global warming programmes and strategies. The capacity established through this project will assist African

countries in future climate change negotiations and deliberations. It will help the region in preparing specific proposals for project funding to the Global Environment Facility, and it will assist in identifying the most cost effective greenhouse gas reduction initiatives and strategies.

Global Environment Facility contribution: $2 million. Funds will be used for experts, consultants, training, workshops, and limited equipment needs. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services. Lead government authorities are: Ghana's Environmental Protection Council of the Ministry of Environment, Kenya's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and Mali's Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technique. (RAF/93/G31)

Mali — Support Programme for Village Land Management in the Seno Plain — This programme will formulate development strategies aimed at restoring the ecological balance caused by continuous degradation of natural resources, and improving food security. Through programme support, village communities will devise annual development plans. These will include long-term strategies such as reforestation, and soil and water conservation. They will also address short-term needs such as investments in agricultural production, improved marketing, and provision of credit.

UN Capital Development Fund contribution: $10,115,772, of which $6,889,966 is from general resources, and $3,225,806 is from the Belgian Survival Fund. Resources will be used for experts, village investment programmes, technical studies, the purchase of pumps, subcontracts with specialized NGOs and local consulting firms. The UN cooperating agency is the Office for Project Services. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development. (MLI/93/C01-3)

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